

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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State Declares Air Quality Action Day Unhealthy Air Pollution Levels Predicted for Today

Concord, NH -- Air pollution concentrations are expected to reach unhealthy levels in Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties on **Friday, July 27**. State officials are calling for an Air Quality Action Day and advise individuals in these areas -- especially active children and adults or anyone with heart disease or respiratory conditions such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis -- to take precautions to protect their health by avoiding prolonged outdoor activity. Even healthy individuals may experience mild health effects and should limit strenuous or prolonged outdoor activities, especially during afternoon and early evening hours when ozone levels are typically the highest.

The NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) expects concentrations of ground-level ozone, the main component of smog and the most prevalent air pollutant during the summer season, to be **unhealthy for sensitive individuals in Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties on July 27**. In addition, concentrations of fine particle pollution are also expected to approach unhealthy levels in these areas, and across much of southern New Hampshire. These particles can cause adverse health effects in people with heart or lung disease and may reduce visibility. The combination of these two pollutants at elevated concentrations may intensify health effects.

The expected unhealthy pollution levels are a result of the warm weather and light southerly winds which are transporting pollution into New Hampshire from surrounding areas. Conditions are expected to improve slightly over the weekend as clouds and precipitation move into the area, though levels of fine particles are expected to remain elevated. DES will continue to monitor air pollution levels over the next few days and will notify the public if unhealthy levels are expected.

Symptoms of ozone exposure include coughing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain when inhaling deeply, and shortness of breath. Fine particle pollution can significantly aggravate existing diseases such as asthma and bronchitis. When exposed to particle pollution, people with heart disease may experience chest pain, palpitations, shortness of breath, and fatigue. People with existing lung diseases may not be able to breathe as deeply or vigorously as normal and may experience symptoms such as coughing and shortness of breath. The severity of the health effects increases as ozone and fine particle concentrations increase.

For further information about potential adverse health effects from ozone exposure and particle pollution, contact DES at (603) 271-4664. For air quality forecasts and current air pollution levels in New Hampshire, call 1-800-935-SMOG or visit the DES website at www.airquality.nh.gov.

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